

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: January 2011

Agenda Item: "No wake" boating restrictions at Brush Lake

Division: Law Enforcement

Action Needed: Approval of Tentative Rule

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

◆ ----- ◆

Background

Located 31 miles southeast of Plentywood, Brush Lake has been a long time recreational area for motorized watercraft and other water-based activities. In 2006, Brush Lake State Park was established, and a day-use area was developed at the north-end of the lake. A campground is to be constructed in the summer of 2011??. The Park's day-use/picnic area includes a boat ramp and dock, along with an approx 100-foot by 9-foot "no boats"/swimming area. As anticipated, with the presence of the concrete boat ramp and a quality dock, the amount of motorized boat traffic noticeably increased, causing periodic congestion in the area of the ramp, dock and swimming area. Both the Region 6 Law Enforcement and Parks Division staff commonly witness motorboats speeding and recklessness causing a hazardous setting in the area of the boat ramp, dock and swimming area. In 2007, regulatory buoys were placed in this area. In turn, during the past three summers, citations and written & verbal courtesy citations were written under the reckless operation statute, along with violations of the state-wide PWC "No Wake" rule. It is proposed to require all motorized watercraft to travel at "no wake speed" in the area of the boat ramp & dock and the "no boats"/swimming area as buoyed. (See enclosed diagram.)

Public Involvement Process & Results

The unsafe environment caused by the concentration of watercraft and swimmers on the water in the vicinity of the park's day-use area has become a fairly common conversation between visitors and FWP staff. During the last three summers, a safer atmosphere for all water-users has been requested by several of the park's visitors. The Sheridan County deputies have also conveyed concern of the high speed exhibited by watercraft in the area of the boat ramp & dock and swimming area.

Alternatives and Analysis

An alternative is to leave the area unrestricted, and not provide any specific regulations for law enforcement and authorized State Parks staff to enforce. Therefore, it is foreseeable that the area of shoreline of the day-use area would continue to present unsafe practices by motorized watercraft.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

Brush Lake State Park was established in order to provide a safe and legal public access to Brush Lake. Although the public can now legally enter the lake, this boating law would provide safer access.

Proposed Motion

Require all motorized watercraft to travel at no wake speed within the boat ramp & dock area and the "no boats"/swimming area as buoyed.